

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method of accessing licensed digital content, the method comprising:
 using a URL address of digital content on a server system, obtaining
licensing information from a location separate from the location of the digital
content; and
 examining the licensing information to confirm that the content is
10 licensed to be provided by a source identified by the URL address of the
content.
2. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 1 wherein
examining the licensing information to confirm that the content is licensed
15 further includes:
 determining a URL pattern referenced in the licensing information; and
 comparing the URL pattern referenced in the licensing information with
the URL address of the content.
- 20 3. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 2 wherein
comparing further includes confirming that the content is licensed by
determining that the URL pattern referenced in the licensing information
corresponds to the URL address of the content.
- 25 4. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 3 wherein the
URL pattern referenced in the licensing information corresponds to the URL
address of the content when the URL pattern matches the URL address of the
content.

5. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 3 further including responding to a URL pattern referenced in the licensing information that corresponds to the URL address of the content by directing a client system to process and render the content.
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6. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 1 wherein using the URL address of the content to obtain licensing information further includes locating licensing information on the server by determining at least one potential location for the licensing information on the server based on the URL address of the content.
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7. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 6 wherein the potential location determined for the licensing information is through a root directory on the server or through a subdirectory on the server where the content resides.
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8. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 7 further comprising searching through the root directory for the licensing information.
- 20 9. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 8 wherein if licensing information is not found through the root directory or if licensing information found through the root directory does not correspond to the content, further including searching through the subdirectory where the content resides on the server for the licensing information.
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10. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 1 wherein obtaining licensing information is in response to a request, by a client system, to download the content from the server.

11. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 10 further comprising responding to the request by:
- delivering the content to the client;
- confirming that a URL pattern referenced in the licensing information
- 5 corresponds to the URL address of the content; and
- in response to confirming that the URL pattern corresponds to the URL addresses of the content, processing and rendering the content on the client.
12. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 1 wherein the
- 10 licensing information includes a licensing key.
13. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 12 wherein the license key is an encrypted text file.
- 15 14. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 12 further including overriding any other license key on the server when the license key is located through a root directory of the URL address of the content.
15. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 1 wherein
- 20 examining the licensing information further includes determining whether the licensing information has been altered.
16. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 1 wherein the
- 25 licensing information further includes information pertaining to restrictions on processing of the content.
17. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 1 wherein the
- licensing information further includes information about a feature of the content that is enabled or disabled.

18. A method of accessing licensed digital content according to Claim 2 wherein the URL pattern referenced in the licensing information indicates one or more URL addresses of licensed content.
- 5 19. A computer program product comprising:
computer executable instructions which respond to a request to
download licensed digital content by:
using a URL address of the content to obtain licensing
information for the content from a location which is separate from the
10 location of the content; and
processing the licensing information to confirm that the content is
licensed to be provided by a source identified by the URL address of the
content.
- 15 20. A computer program product as described in Claim 19 wherein the instructions
for processing the licensing information to confirm that the content is licensed
further include instructions to:
determine a URL pattern referenced in the licensing information; and
compare the URL pattern referenced in the licensing information with
20 the URL address of the content.
21. A computer program product as described in Claim 20 wherein the instructions
to compare further include instructions to confirm that the content is licensed by
determining that the URL pattern referenced in the licensing information
25 corresponds to the URL address of the content.
22. A computer program product as described in Claim 21 wherein the URL pattern
referenced in the licensing information corresponds to the URL address of the
content when the URL pattern matches the URL address of the content.

23. A computer program product as described in Claim 21 further including responding to a URL pattern referenced in the licensing information that corresponds to the URL address of the content by causing a client system to process the content.
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24. A computer program product as described in Claim 19 wherein the instructions for using the URL address of the content to obtain licensing information further include instructions that locate licensing information on a server by determining at least one potential location for the licensing information on the server based on the URL address of the content.
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25. A computer program product as described in Claim 24 wherein the potential location determined for the licensing information is located through a root directory on the server or through a subdirectory on the server where the content resides.
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26. A computer program product as described in Claim 25 further comprising instructions for searching through the root directory for the licensing information.
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27. A computer program product as described in Claim 25 wherein if the licensing information is not found through the root directory or if the licensing information found through the root directory does not correspond to the content, further including searching through the subdirectory where the content resides on the server for the licensing information.
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28. A computer program product as described in Claim 19 wherein the instructions for obtaining licensing information are responsive to a request, from a client system, to download the content from a server.
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29. A computer program product as described in Claim 28 further including instructions for responding to the request by:
- delivering the content to the client;
 - confirming that a URL pattern referenced in the licensing information
- 5 corresponds to the URL address of the content; and
- responding to confirming that the URL pattern corresponds to the URL address of the content by causing the client to process the content.
30. A computer program product as described in Claim 19 wherein the licensing
- 10 information further includes a license key.
31. A computer program product as described in Claim 30 further including overriding any other license key on the server when the license key is located through a root directory of the URL address of the content.
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32. A computer program product as described in Claim 19 wherein the instructions for processing the licensing information further include instructions that determine whether there are any restrictions on processing of the content.
- 20 33. A software system to access licensed digital content comprising:
- a communications handler responsive to a request to download licensed digital content from a server computer system; and
 - a licensing manager, in communication with the communications handler, which uses a URL address of the content on the server to obtain
- 25 licensing information from the server, the licensing manager examining the licensing information to confirm that the content is licensed to be provided by a source identified by the URL address of the content.

34. A software system as in Claim 33 wherein the communications handler or the licensing manager is associated with a runtime environment executing on a client system.
- 5 35. A software system as in Claim 33 wherein a client system initiates the request to download the content from the server.
36. A software system as in Claim 33 wherein the licensing manager examines the licensing information to confirm that the content is licensed by:
- 10 determining a URL pattern referenced in the licensing information; and
 comparing the URL pattern referenced in the licensing information with the URL address of the content.
37. A software system as in Claim 36 wherein comparing further includes
- 15 confirming, by the licensing manager, that the content is licensed when the URL pattern referenced in the licensing information corresponds to the URL address of the content.
38. A software system as in Claim 37 wherein the licensing manager responds to a
- 20 URL pattern referenced in the licensing information which corresponds to the URL address of the content by directing a client system to process the content.
39. A software system as in Claim 33 wherein the licensing manager obtains the licensing information by determining at least one potential location for the
- 25 licensing information on the server, the potential location being based on the URL address of the content.
40. A software system as in Claim 39 wherein the potential location is through a
- 30 root directory on the server or a subdirectory on the server which is the same directory where the content is stored.

41. A software system as in Claim 40 wherein the licensing manager further includes a search routine to search through the root directory for the licensing information.
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42. A software system as in Claim 41 wherein if the licensing manager determines that licensing information is not found through the root directory or that licensing information found through the root directory does not correspond to the content, the search routine is directed to search the subdirectory which is the same directory where the content is stored.
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43. A software system as in Claim 33 wherein the licensing manager further includes logic for forgoing processing of any other licensing information on the server when the licensing information is located through a root directory of the URL address of the content.
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44. A software system as in Claim 33 wherein the licensing manager examining the licensing information further includes determining whether there are any restrictions on processing of the content.
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45. A system of accessing licensed digital content comprising:
- means for using a URL address of digital content on a server system to obtain licensing information from a location separate from the location of the digital content; and
- 25 means for examining the licensing information to confirm that the content is licensed to be provided by a source identified by the URL address of the content.